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This paper discusses the social realities which characteristically confront the urban school, how the school presently adapts to the exigencies of an urban environment, and how the school program might be better fitted to this environment. The urban realities and the psychological pressures associated with these realities are classified as--(1) density and loss of identity, (2) bureaucratization and powerlessness, and (3) diversity and alienation. The relevance of socially aware school innovations to educational quality, and social reality as a means to traditional and "new" educational objectives are specifically considered. In the context of the social realities, a beginning model of an urban school is proposed. The model program is envisioned as being responsible to students in the following areas--(1) skills and knowledge, (2) personal talent and interest, (3) social action and exploration of self and others. School staffing and the school-community relationship are also discussed. (LB)

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SOCIAL REALITIES AND THE URBAN SCHOOL

Presented at the ASCD Conference
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SOCIAL REALITIES

AND

THE URBAN SCHOOL

This paper has three main purposes: to clarify what is distinctly urban about urban schools; to discuss how schools presently deal with the distinctions; and lastly to suggest a way of making the distinctions more synomous with a school's programming. Before beginning to deal with these issues, however, we would like to mention the catalysts that prompt such a paper.

We are living in a period of great social crisis - domestically and internationally - a crisis that becomes increasingly difficult to ignore. It used to be that most of us were able to tune out rather easily whenever we got too depressed over the social dilemmas of our time. We knew there was segregation in the South, that there were lynchings now and then, and we were angry enough to contribute a few dollars to the N.A.A.C.P. and then sit back and forget about it. When it was pointed out that the North was racist too, it was accepted intellectually with an understanding nod, but we all knew that deep down it was the average white Southerner who was the real bigot. Those times of sloughing off the problem or faulting others for it seem to have gone forever. There are fewer and fewer places to hide as the blacks become more militant and demanding and above all violent. Never before has it been so vehemently expressed to the white professional that he is incompetent because so many black children are failing in school and that he should give up his authority. When in our past history had the white citizenry been told by so many that it is going to burn if it doesn't shape up?

What all this means is that we, the establishment, are becoming frightened. There is a persistant gnawing fear of our power being gradually eroded and our competence undermined because bascially it is being continually brought to our attention that our ways of going about things don't seem to work in the urban school, and more recently even in the suburban school. Somehow we are losing control over the situation. In a way, it seems to us, that fear - perhaps with a good portion of helplessness mixed in - is a major catalyst for asking that we consider the issues and problems of the urban school. It is our hope that some of these raw insistent feelings will allow us to face as directly as possible the dilemmas and somehow to create constructive rather than defensive responses.

If the problems of urban areas and urban schools are frightening to us, they are also mandating us to re-evaluate objectives, methodology, content, and virtually everything we know (or thought we knew) about education in general. Moreover, we are beginning to see that what is happening in large urban areas is really a preview of coming attractions for a major portion of our country. The concentration of problems we now view in stark bas relief in the urban schools is beginning to emerge, we feel, even in non-urban areas.

If this is so, what is it about the urban scene that is most pertinent to all of us and to education in general?

I. WHAT IS URBAN ABOUT AN URBAN SCHOOL?

If we were to choose the one characteristic of an urban context that had priority for schools it would be stated as follows:

The urban context is one in which <u>there is persistent stress imposed by intensely concentrated social realities</u>. Although all schools operate in a context of social realities, those that are in smaller more homogeneous communities have much less tension since the schools reflect a reality that

is more parallel to that of the surrounding community. In addition, in those communities there is not the intense concentration of so many varied realities--- so many different slices of life. The urban school, located in an area of great density and diversity, finds itself at a convergence point of a whole array of realities.

While most schools have devotedly divorced themselves from direct confrontations with social reality, the urban school stands out as most absurd in its efforts to emulate the way reality is reflected in suburban schools. But, before we go into what the school is or isn't doing, we need to take a hard look at the urban social realities and the stress they impose.

A. Density and Loss of Identity

To what extent do the urban realities contribute to the identity crisis of the city dweller. "Do I really count?"; "Do I have any importance?"; "Am I being lost in the massive shuffle of big city life"? are often the unverbalized questions of the city dwellers - all of which may be condensed into "How does the city affect my perceptions of myself?"

Everyone knows that cities are crowded, that space is at a premium, that it is difficult to get away from crowds of hustling, bustling people. Everywhere there are lines of people waiting. Subway trains provide for some of the most physically intimate rides obtainable anywhere. But what is the persistent stress on the indivdual confronted with great numbers of people? We would contend that there is greater depersonalization, less empathy, greater feelings of loneliness, anonymity, and a general hardening or mechanization of relationships with people.

Varied comments of urban dwellers reflect this description:

> "I don't feel sorry for nobody. When you been around this town as long as I've been and ya seen all the nuts and kooks it just runs off your back like water."
>
> "How can I possibly count as anything important when I'm never felt more lonely in my life than when I moved to the city. Everyone seems to be in such a hurry to get to his own hidden little world. Strange to feel so lonely when there are so many people around."

People living in extremely close physical contact with one another and highly dependent, yet remaining isolated in general from one another -- a sea of unknown faces -- is just one of the paradoxes of the urban social reality of size and density. Impersonal relationships are numerous here and the brief casual contacts between persons allow in most instances for the communication of only superficial information. Yet, on the basis of this limited information, people evaluate and rank others. Standardized, superficial criteria for stratifying people thus evolve according to address, speech, manners, skin color, dress, etc. There are too many people to absorb as individuals; therefore, a categorical depersonalized short hand becomes reinforced.

Within the urban school itself, depersonalization is dramatically evident. Class size has rarely been pared down, in spite of "average" numbers issued in the board of education reports. Having <u>every</u> child study the same thing at the same time for the same length of time is the rule. Teachers rarely live in the same community in which they teach and so parents and teachers are strangers. Because of the great numbers of children, cumulative records and reports in effect become the "children" about whom standardized decisions are made. Personalizing education would mean fouling up the machinery of the organization and by all means the machinery comes before the individual or else we would have chaos.

Which brings us to our next major social reality of the urban area:

B. Bureaucratization And Powerlessness

To what extent does a city contribute to the sense of power in its citizenry? (By power we mean the feeling that we have some control or influence over what happens to us.) Let's examine this question.

In spite of Mayor Lindsay's pronouncement that New York City shall be known as Fun City, living there is like being a member of "Strike-of-the-month-club." In the last three years we have had subway, newspaper, hospital workers, teacher, garage, taxi cab, and most recently garbage strikes. Many of these caused considerable inconvenience to the urban residents. What struck us, the authors, however, was the degree of nonchalance with which the citizens endured these events with an "Oh well it will be over soon" attitude. It's almost as if we were being reminded that this was the price one has to pay for living in Fun City - or for that matter in any large city. James Reston, in an editorial in the New York Times, was astouned at the complacent and passive reaction of the New York Citizenry. "The force (the bureaucracy) is so powerful," he writes, "that they are beyond reason or persuasion or control. Power will tell in the end, they seem to be saying, and the people are merely spectators and victims in the struggle."* "You can't fight city hall" is the dominant theme. The bigger the city, the less feeling of control, so why bother. Anyone who has gone through the experience of trying to get help on a problem from a large city agency and being passed from one official to another has an emotional sense of the castrating effect of such an experience. The public is regarded by frustrated bureaucratic clerks as an imposition, an obstacle, a digression from their work---which is, ironically, to serve the public.

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*"New York; The City That Quit," editorial by James Reston, The New York Times, Friday, October 22, 1965.

And so it happens with the urban school---

Scene: An urban elementary school; outside the main office

Time: First day of school; registration

Characters: School secretary and about 20 mothers and their children.

Props: None; No chairs, nothing, just a wall and a floor.

Secretary: (Shouting) Will you ladies line up against that wall please--we'll be with you as soon as we can! (disappears into office. One hour passes. Children are restless and noisy. Mothers are reprimanding the children)

Secretary: (Shouting) Will you please keep those kids quiet. Can't you see how busy we are! (Disappears into office)

Many people question public institutions as to who serves whom. The verdict rendered most often is that in reality the client is at the service of the institution. Thus "you can't fight city hall" has become "you can't fight the board of education". As cogs in a gigantic machinery, administrators, teachers, children, and parents are rendered powerless in persistent ways.

The following statements help to succinctly sum up this powerlessness vis a vis bureaucracy and urban living: "for satisfaction and growth, people need to engage in active interchange with their environment; to use it, organize it, even destroy ------ his physical surroundings (and institutions)* should be accessible and open-ended..."** The present urban social reality is very far from this ideal.

C. Diversity and Disconnectedness

To what extend does the city create a context for connectedness between different people? Does it engender a sense of community in which its variety of people see each other as important and related to one another? Does it create a sense of belonging?

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*Parenthetical insertion made by the authors.
**From the chapter by Kevin Lynch, "The City as Environment," p. 194

Of all the social realities faced by the urban dwellers and especially the urban school, the tremendous diversity of people looms as the most crucial distinction. Because so many different kinds of people, attitudes, perceptions, values, habits are concentrated in a limited geographical area this may be cited as one of the most unique aspects of an urban environment.

It is one thing, however, to know that diversity is a fact of urban life, but it is quite another to realize how diversity is viewed by the urban resident. To a few, diversity provides an exciting possibility for enrichment and expansion of one's own perceptions and experiences through a kind of cross-fertilizing interaction between different groups of people. These are the few who thrive on variety and find it nourishing. But we think that this attitude is not that prevalent in the city. More often diversity is viewed as threatening and at best novel or interesting, but certainly not anything one would consciously seek to develop. It is in the city, typically, that the great potential for cross-fertilization lies and yet the distinct ethnic and racial turfs are entered by others only when absolutely necessary. It seems as if the only meeting ground between these diverse groups is in the restaurant -- but then only recipes and foods cross-fertilize, not the people. Physical and psychological boundaries that keep people disconnected and alienated from one another are as well maintained as the Berlin Wall.

The urban school, meanwhile, has always considered itself the great homogenizer. It has taken great masses of diverse people and acculturated them to the middle-class mainstream. Whether or not specifically articulated as such, this is what the mission of the school was and is. Only <u>now</u> something seems to be going wrong. The acculturation mission is having tremendous bumps and wobbles. Many of the processes established by the school are intended to stamp out diversity, both cultural and individual, so that the urban school actually alienates diverse pupils and keeps them disconnected from the school.

If we now go back to our initial characterization of the urban milieu -- which was stated as "the persistent stress imposed by intensely concentrated social realities" -- we can summarize in this way: density and size, bureaucracy, and diversity are social realities which persistently lay stress on an individual's concern for identity, power, and connectedness. Certainly there are other ways to select and categorize social realities; however, we think this way will serve well enough our present purposes.

The stresses we have been discussing also imply that a city person has less opportunity to ignore social realities. He is exposed to them whether he wants to be or not. He is close to crime, riots, poverty, muggings, alcoholics -- they are constantly making themselves felt, he cannot remain totally impervious to them. And so it is with children in the urban school. There are things going on in the real world which are part of an urban child's experience that the urban school has attempted to shy away from. Thus there is dichotomy and tension between the child's urban curriculum and the school's more antiseptic curriculum -- a dichotomy which usually leads the urban child to label the school's curriculum as "phoney."

We have been saving a final descriptive characterization for last in order to emphasize it. What we have been discussing up to now are some of the effects of urbanization on the so-called "average" resident -- who could very well be middle-class and white. Depersonalization, anonymity, isolation, powerlessness, can be and <u>are</u> felt by people whose bellies are relatively full, who have steady incomes, and who have not been discriminated against by society. Now, however, it is becoming more evident that increasingly the "average" city dweller is more likely to be poor and discriminated against. Public schools in large cities are basically the habitat of the socio-economically disadvantaged and will become more so. Therefore if the characteristics of urban stress are felt by those who are relatively

well-off, we must magnify those stresses, perhaps double or triple them, when applying them to the disadvantaged resident. We must also magnify those stresses when applying them to the urban public school itself. The urban school thus finds itself in the center of a situation where the black demands for power, identity, and connectedness are hammering on its doors with ever increasing insistence.

MORE

II. GETTING SOCIAL REALITIES INTO THE SCHOOL

A. Operational Constraints on Social Realities

Thus far we have sketched certain social realities that surround urban schools and the psychosocial concerns so closely related to these realities. The question now becomes: what role should the urban school assume vis a vis the social realities and concerns? That the urban school should play a role has already been assumed, for if the urban school (or any school, for that matter) declares no role, then it would admit to dealing with social unreality -- a pedagogically unjustifiable position. Or the school must make the case that the content and process of the standard school already deals with social realities -- a case which would be spotty at best.

In order for the urban school to deal with these social realities in an authentic, direct way, certain operational (actual) pedagogical realities must be identified and analyzed to determine their influence in the urban school's capacity for dealing with social reality.

Let us begin with the operational definition of quality education that is the day to day yardstick used for assessing a good school by the interested parties involved with public education---parents, communities, teachers, administration, school boards, state departments of education, teachers organizations, etc. Stated simply, the operational definition is "grade level or above performance in basic skills and academic achievement, as measured by standardized tests" (e.g. Iowa Basic Skills, Regents Exams, etc.) For example, ghetto parents want their children to be reading at grade level, not two or three years behind; suburban economically advantaged parents want their children to be two or three years above grade level in reading, etc. Grade level achievement takes on increased importance to the interested parties also because college entry is dependent on adequate achievement in these same academic skill areas.

Consequently the mission of the school has been forged and a structure (e.g. bureaucracy, graded system, etc.) and a process from early childhood to college has been formulated to meet the mission.

This concensus on what "quality education" is, on what schools are for, can be challenged or disturbed only at the risk of persistent retaliation by the interested publics. We are all familiar with the term "frill" which is attached to any attempt to introduce into the standard educational process any "alien" content -- even if it be content that deals with such fundamental issues as alienation identity, power, connectedness, talent, career or the like. Consequently social reality of the types depicted earlier cannot be introduced into the present urban school without bumping directly into the operational definition of quality education. Such social realities of necessity must be made <u>relevant</u> to this operational definition if their entry into the institution is to be initiated. The onus of responsibility is therefore on those who seek more social reality in the school; it is their task to justify its relationship to "quality education."

For some seeking to deal with the social reality of cultural identity for black people, the introduction of Swahili into the school may be attempted, only to find the verdict that Swahili is irrelevant to the present definition of quality education. Yet Swahili has been included as an "elective" in certain urban schools, thereby giving us an idea that the school may consider "adding" or building appendages in for certain social realities. But the bulk of the content of social reality stands apart, waiting to be legitimized by the urban school and hitting head on with the institutional constraints that restrict fundamental tampering with the traditional content. "Covering" the year's worth of current academic content remains the gatekeeper of the present system and is to all intents and purpose the primary objective of urban education.

To pursue the pervasive effects on the institution of the operational definition of "quality education" let us analyze its effect on the professional. For example, the

teacher, the institutional agent closest to the learner is imprisoned by this definition. On the one hand the urban teacher admits that the children are not responding to the standard education content and approaches, and admits that new content and testing strategies are desperately needed. On the other hand, he is constrained by the accepted institutional norms regulating pedagogic behavior ("don't be rebel," "play the game") and by a form of organization which isolates him from his colleagues. The result is that teacher and administrators develop mechanisms to cope with the "institutional realities." Teachers argue that given the existing system, "quality education" could be purveyed by them if four conditions were met:

1.) smaller classes,
2.) riddance of disruptive children who disturb the class,
3.) materials that keep learners engaged, and,
4.) freedom from routine administrative details and interruptions.

These demands by teachers are quite realistic given the institutional setting in which they are asked to implement "quality" education: even though, thus far, where these conditions have been implemented, the results still are not encouraging.

The point is that an entire formal school process and organization (e.g. school design, staff utilization, teacher certifications, etc.) has been structured to deal with a traditional, and, to us, outdated definition of quality education. Despite the changes in assignment which society has given to the school in recent years, (e.g. the growing demands that the school give education for diversity, for all, and for the social roles that are needed in our society), the old ways prevail. Those in the educational institution charged with the responsibility for realizing quality education as well as those outside the system (each of whom is the product of the standard educational process) hold to the conventional wisdom---to the conventional definition of quality education. Therefore, it seems that the major road open for bringing social realities into existing urban schools would be to stress the relevance of social realities for improving basic skills and standard

academic achievement. If this were done, however, social realities would become, at best, new means to old ends.

B. Social Realities as a Means to Traditional Objectives

Despite the fact that the use of social realities for improving standard academic achievement is really only a way of getting learners to old ends, let us examine how this might be done. Social realities can be legitimized in the institution and can foster traditional educational objectives in several ways.

The present social studies curriculum and curriculum in the other disciplines in urban elementary schools can be expanded to include units on varied social realities. Thus, the unit on the American Indians could include a section on the plight of modern Indians, enriched possibly by poignant samples of the songs of modern folk singers such as Buffy St. Marie; the unit on the American Negro could deal with the poverty of current ghetto existence; the unit on understanding other cultures could include at least the fact that 3/4 of the world is starving; etc. Secondary urban schools might, perhaps, develop a new course, entitled "Urban Social Realities," in which many of the problems identified earlier in this paper could be covered. Teacher training institutions could add a course for prospective teachers, called "Teaching Social Realities to Urban Youth." The creative teacher could augment any of these units or courses by readings in sociology on the urban milieu (including news clippings on the recent Riot Commission's report); by field trips to ghetto areas; by films on tenement living or the aftermath of summer riots, or by guest speakers who have worked with addicts, dropouts, etc.

The children exposed to these "new" areas would, we suspect, proceed to write about them and be marked for originality, grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc. These "new" experiences could become the basis for experience stories to increase interest in reading for minority children. Of course, some discussion on the implications

of the social realities on human beings in general and on the learner himself may be expected to emerge. If these dialogues develop, however, the likelihood is great that the discussion will deal with diagnoses and sharpen descriptions of the social reality problem. If students begin to ask what they personally should do about the problem such as forming a protest group and marching on the local political leader, the teacher would probably try to discourage such prescriptions (partly because of her own image and welfare given the present "ground rules" of acceptable behavior governing the professional teacher in big city school systems).

Although we have been perhaps overly facetious in the preceding paragraphs about slipping the social realities in as means to traditional ends, let us state sincerely that: if social realities entered the school program even as a means only for making contact with the learner and for taking him toward the basic skills and academic objectives presently emphasized, the present school program would, we feel, be greatly enriched. Moreover, we must once underscore that we are not for one moment suggesting the abandonment of basic skills or academic mastery; on the contrary, we propose to argue their importance and continuation. Our concern is that they have become all - important and that all new content is legitimized mainly as a vehicle to be manipulated toward the academic objectives, thus attributing a second class status to such content as social reality. We propose to argue later that basic skills and academic mastery can be dealt with more efficiently if the urban school were organized differently. We also propose to offer a different interpretation for defining what is relevant to both the needs of the learner and society in urban schools.

Our fear is that if social realities were used exclusively as a basic pedagogic strategy for getting learners to perform better in traditional skill areas, it would do a basic injustice to both the social realities and the skill areas. Our hunch is that the learner would sense a "phoniness" about this strategy; thereby, diluting the potential learning inherent in a curriculum of social reality. For example, if the black student

senses that the inclusion of "black power" in the social studies program is being used really to lead him toward other "irrelevant" academic mastery he may retreat from involvement with both areas.

What we see then as the most beneficial way of introducing social realities into the school is to stress social realities as content in their own right that has intrinsic value because it is integrally related to the learner, to his personal concerns, and to the needs of an open self-renewing society.

C. Social Realities and New Educational Objectives

Therefore what we are suggesting is that social realities can become important content for <u>making contact</u> with and maintaining the sustained involvement of diverse urban student populations. The very nature of social realities can, at least, engage the learner temporarily either because of the deviation perceived by students from the rather anti-septic curriculum of present day schooling or because social realities contain the seeds of an intrinsic relevance to the learners' basic concerns. This phase we label, "making contact".

The tricky part comes with what happens after contact. If we go from contact mainly toward the traditional academic areas, we have been suggesting that the contact won't last and that kids won't play the game because the traditional academic content is irrelevant to many. This does <u>not</u> mean that social reality has no role in increasing academic performance. We simply are making the point that to <u>overload</u> social realities for this purpose would be a less viable strategy than to explore new learning objectives--objectives that would coincide with, ironically, what educators and political statesmen have been proclaiming for <u>centuries</u> to be legitimate responsibilities of public schools as major social institutions. Those responsibilities, or, as they are often called, "broad aims" of education, are namely to foster in all learners those behaviors that lead to genuine concern for and act upon creating environments that favorably affect the

development of individual human potential. The new specific objectives should lead to the more humanistically oriented goals of an open society. In short, the school should develop in each learner behavior more consonant with participatory democracy.

This is a tall order, and quite a leap for the urban schools to take at this time for several very real reasons. First, as we have indicated, the dominance of academic mastery objectives limits sharply the achievement of other types of objectives, especially when children in urban schools are performing so poorly in these very basic areas. Secondly, the school organization is not geared to serve adequately other objectives. Thirdly, and perhaps most important, if social realities are introduced as a means for developing the learners who practice participatory democracy, the consequences of this participation could be quite controversial. Regarding this third point, one needs only mention the reactions to the recent organized student protests and marches in various urban schools (often with demands for including Swahili in areas of Negro history). To utilize social realities, then, as a means for achieving new educational objectives aimed at helping an individual act upon the social realities, must be thought through quite carefully. If we do not approach this area systematically, the consequences may jeopardize not only the inclusion of social realities into the educational process but may also result in heightened frustrations of the learners themselves and of the other parties who make up public education.

Perhaps, in order to approach this systematically, we must take into consideration the various levels to which social reality objectives should be aimed. Assuming that people want new objectives that are more intrinsically related to social realities, there are a number of levels in which even these can be approached.

The new objectives might be directed first only at making contact with the learners and making them more aware of the social realities. Assuming that contact is made with the learners, however, the next question is: after contact, what? What

would be the next phase or level of approaching the new objectives?

The second level appears to be awareness in more personal terms. That is, objectives could be developed that would help the learner to begin to understand not only the nature and implication of the social realities discussed and analyzed, but also to see that he is a part of the very social reality being assessed. For example, the learner exposed to the higher disease rate for ghetto dwellers may not only understand this as a fact but may begin to link the implication to his own welfare or to that of his friends, family, community, or nation. If the linkage to his own intrinsic concern is made, the result may be increased anxiety or fear that is either suppressed or overt. The questions now become, what does the school offer the learner at this point? What tools would the school have ready for the learner to deal with his own anger? Does the present orientation of the teacher, counselor, school psychologist, or administrator provide for the proper handling of such hostility?

Ironically many urban learners are being taught by other teachers in the hidden curriculum which exists outside the school, such as community leaders who can articulate the plight of the poor, of the black people, of minorities who are being victimized by an apathetic white society. The learners' frustration, anger, hositility at the realization that they have been victims of a negative environment, triggers emotional energies which are not being dealt with constructively either outside or inside the urban school.

Once special realities become linked to the learners' own existence (e.g. feelings such as "My chances of getting a good paying job in a white racist society are limited," or "When I'm out of my neighborhood I feel like a fish out of water"), awareness takes on a different character. When, further, the learner becomes aware that most slums can be eliminated if certain priorities are established by the city, state, or nation, then the awareness becomes connected to questions about who should be doing what about it?

The learner may then take the step from exposure to the social realities of, say, slum life to the broader conceptual generalization that environments shape growth and development for each person either negatively or positively and if you as an individual are in what can be assessed to be a negative environment then that same environment is thwarting your human potential and life chance.

Once at this stage we suggest that the learner may take a step further. He may begin to think: my options, given my understanding of the generalization, are to:

1. Learn to <u>cope</u> or <u>adjust</u> to the negative environment (e.g. ghetto)
2. Learn how to get out into a positive environment
3. Learn how to fight blindly in the negative environment
4. Learn the strategies and systems for reconstructing the negative environment.

When the learner reaches this stage, he is beyond simple awareness and is thinking about actual options or alternatives for action.

At this point even though the learner has used social realities as a tool for serious thought and feeling and for considering alternative actions, no <u>direct action</u> need follow. For example, even though the learner may be aware that his chances of "making it" with big money are limited, he may not be motivated to the point of taking action, or he may lack the know-how for taking such action.

We believe that both cognitive and affective (i.e. an emotional bond, linking the social realities to his own intrinsic concerns) attachments are necessary in order to move the learner closer to the level of direct action and participation and to begin to deal with deeper questions of identity and connectedness.

However, a third level is also necessary -- role behavior, or the <u>performing</u>, <u>doing</u>, <u>acting</u> level. Thinking and, later, feeling behavior has characterized the earlier stages of awareness but it is not enough to think about the social realities problems, at some point personal action follows thought. A learner can think (and probably feel strongly) about the negative environment that has been affecting his life for years, but

until he acts as an agent to reconstruct the environment, the cycle to true participatory democracy will not have been completed. This stage requires clinical opportunities for learners to behave in adult role situations. The role of participant will develop when the learner is placed in reality contexts in which he can actively perform his role directly. This may run the range from the simple writing of letters to political leaders, to marching on city hall, to working in pre-school centers, to involvement in community action projects, or in domestic peace corps programs or international Peace Corps programs. Thus a new set of objectives related to social realities must be formulated to help the learner deal with this action level.

If the school intends to consider objectives other than academic mastery rather profound changes in schooling need to be made. Objectives related to social participation and personal development cannot be left to chance. The consequences on the individual, the public school, and society are too great. Moreover, it must be remembered that it is not a matter of substituting social realities for academic skills, but rather of creating a setting in which all these objectives can be realized.

Before we suggest an actual model for an urban school that is organized to deal with these next sets of educational objectives, we need to emphasize that a set of objectives related to individual identity problems must be developed. During our exposition of participation we touched on the related problem confronting all urban youth -- the social reality of self. The urban learner joins all others in asking the fundamental questions-- "who am I?"

Thus, while participatory democracy -- the social reconstruction role helps create feelings of individual and group potency -- is needed, the process does not automatically deal with the inner reconstruction of the individual. Objectives must also be devised that focus on the inner world of the learner, of new ways for him to negotiate

with himself and his basic sense of connectedness or disconnectedness with others.

Programs dealing with inner reconstruction are now being developed in such places as Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California, which includes such content areas as "Inner Imagery", "Emotional Expression", "Encounter Groups", and "Sensory Training".

MORE

III. A MODEL OF AN URBAN SCHOOL

After all of this description of urban realities and analysis of their effects, what kind of prescription for the urban school is possible? According to the diagnosis given thus far, we shall offer a suggestion for a beginning model of an urban school that is directly connected with the issues we have raised. Therefore, corresponding to the limits we have given ourselves, the model would have to meet the following criteria:

1. Social reality and the school's curriculum have to be intrinsically connected.

    a. the realities must be acknowledged by the school by setting up a structure in which children are engaged in the examination of these realities.

    b. children will learn the skills and behaviors needed to influence social realities.

    c. the skills and behaviors for social change will be applied by the children to the social realities.

2. Power, Identity, and Connectedness have to become a legitimized basis for curriculum development with the aim of expanding the repertoire of responses children have in dealing with these concerns.

3. Diversity, both cultural and individual, and its potential for cross-fertilization has to be encouraged and expanded through educational objectives and organization that allow and legitimize such an aim.

4. The school and the community it serves have to exist less as separate entities and instead develop responsibilities and lines of authority that are more integregated and shared.

Our construction of the model will have four major directions: A) to consider an expansion and change in form of educational objectives; B) to chart what a school would look like organizationally that follows through on these objectives; C) to determine how and what kinds of supportive personnel might be utilized; and D) to examine the relationship the school might have with the urban community it serves.

A. The Objectives

For a starter we can begin with three kinds of objectives, only one set of which is presently legitimized in the schools.

The legitimate ones ("A" objectives), as we have indicated repeatedly, are those that are geared to the attainment of academic skills and subject matter content. These are the objectives that rule the educational roost (in spite of the fact that they haven't succeeded in achieving many of our broader educational aims). These are the objectives that practically all educational "innovations" are tuned into. When these are the sole objectives of education, all descriptions and diagnosis of any group of people or any area (e.g., urban) become very difficult since they must be squeezed into subject matter goals. If we discuss power, identity, diversity, connectedness and all of the other issues we have discussed, it becomes quite a challenge to try to fit those issues into teaching tasks that have as their aims:

1) Getting children to read, to compute, to outline;
2) To know the causes of the Civil War;
3) To become familiar with the geography of Latin America;
4) To know the parts of speech;
5) Or to know the material that constitutes the earths' crust.

We certainly don't intend to deny the value of such tool skills and knowledge, but we find it difficult to relate socio-psychological descriptions to such objectives. In fact, we think it is a major reason for so many urban teachers becoming annoyed with consultants and with special resource people who feed teachers descriptions and analyses of their pupils. For they, the teachers, are constantly being put in the position of implementing a description when none of their teaching tasks have any intrinsic relation to those descriptions. While still acknowledging the importance of and including skills and subject achievement objectives as a portion of the schools responsibility, we would like to suggest two more sets of objectives:

"B" Objectives

To have the children acquire the skills of negotiating with adults.

To have the children devise a variety of strategies for getting something they want.

To have the children learn to identify the real power sources in their community.

To have the children develop the skills of organizing people in order to create some change in their immediate social realities.

To have children learn to use all forms of media in order to gain support for some social action they intend to take.

To have the children develop general skills for constructive social action such as:*

1. The ability to define clearly the objectives of social action.

2. The ability to evaluate the existing situation, to identify obstacles to the goal, and to identify the available resources for overcoming these obstacles.

3. The ability to analyze and to generate alternative measures for action, and to predict the various outcomes of each alternative.

4. The ability to select the most valuable of these alternatives and to test them through action.

5. The ability to evaluate the tested procedure and to revise strategies, thus beginning the cycle again. **

If curriculum were developed with these objectives as their focus, we would begin to see a more intrinsic linkage between a teaching task and descriptions of powerlessness.

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*These are basically problem-solving and scientific method skills, but here they are applied directly to social action.

**Fantini and Weinstein, The Disadvantaged: Challenge to Education, Harper & Row, New York, 1968, p. 436.

"C" Objectives

Become aware of how whom they live with and where they live influence how they perceive themselves.

Learn how society's definitions of groups of people affect the way they judge themselves.

Analyse the criteria they are using for self judgment in terms of its objective base.

Become more capable of predicting their own behavior.

Expand their repertoire of responses to situations.

See themselves as more differentiated sub-selves.

Discover strengths, talents and interests within themselves of which they may not now be aware.

Although these objectives are crudely stated, we hope that one can begin to see their relationship with the descriptions of urban dweller's concern for identity. When one thinks of all of the energy that has gone into the curriculum reform movement without even considering curriculum that might achieve the objectives listed above one begins to wonder if we are really serious about dealing with the basic concerns of our society.

B. School Organization Encompassing "A"B"C" Objectives, The Three Tiered School*

In visualizing a school that facilitates the attainment of these objectives, picture a school that has the following three distinctive areas of responsibility (a 3-tiered school):

I. Skills and knowledge
II. Personal talent and interest
III. Social action and explorations of self and others.

*The three-tiered model was suggested to us by Bruce Joyce in the publication "Restructuring Elementary Education: A Multiple Learnings Systems Approach," New York, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1966, p. 4.

Tier I is comprised of objectives related to basic skills, learning to learn skills,* information and the major concepts of specific disciplines that are most needed as essential building blocks for the cognitive development of the child. Tier I thus includes reading, computation, writing, and speaking skills and the basic information and ideas contained in the social studies, science, and other disciplines. We would also include here ideas from psychology, sociology, anthropology and political science, and would substitute these ideas and concepts for much of what is taught currently in social studies, English, and science.

It is Tier I that serves as the information and skills retrieval base. It is the most highly automated, individually paced, self-instructional, materials-centered tier. Most of the current discussion on individualized and programmed instruction is directed to this tier. Although such undivided attention to Tier I is discouraging in many respects, it is also encouraging; for the more efficient Tier I becomes (either through IPI or other means), the more time there will be for work in Tiers II and III.

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*Learning to learn skills refers to those processes, ways of thinking, examining or behaving that help the child become more adept at learning and that have been described by many educators as: critical thinking, analytic procedures, discussion procedures, rational processes, inquiry, evaluating, problem solving, hypothesizing, planning, predicting outcomes, generating alternatives, classification, analogy, comparison, inductive and deductive reasonging, etc., etc. The point to be made here, however, is that we do not regard these process skills as an outcome or end product in themselves. Although such skills may be handled more or less in that rudimentary way in Tier I, it is in Tiers II & III that we hope they will be exercised to the fullest. For instance, many people believe that if a child can be instructed in critical thinking, that is all he needs. As important as critical thinking and other process skills are for the learner, we feel that they should be a means, an instrumentality, for helping children handle things that they are concerned about intrinsically. Thus, while introduced in Tier I, process skills will be utilized more meaningfully in Tier II and III.

Tier II, while also highly individualized, has a different flavor. Wheras in the first tier content was fed to the child, in Tier II it is drawn forth from him in the form of whatever latent talents or abilities exist or may be discovered. It would be here that everything from learning to play tuba, working on a research project of his own design, studying Swahili, or writing a play would occur. This tier allows for development of individual creativity and exploration of interests.

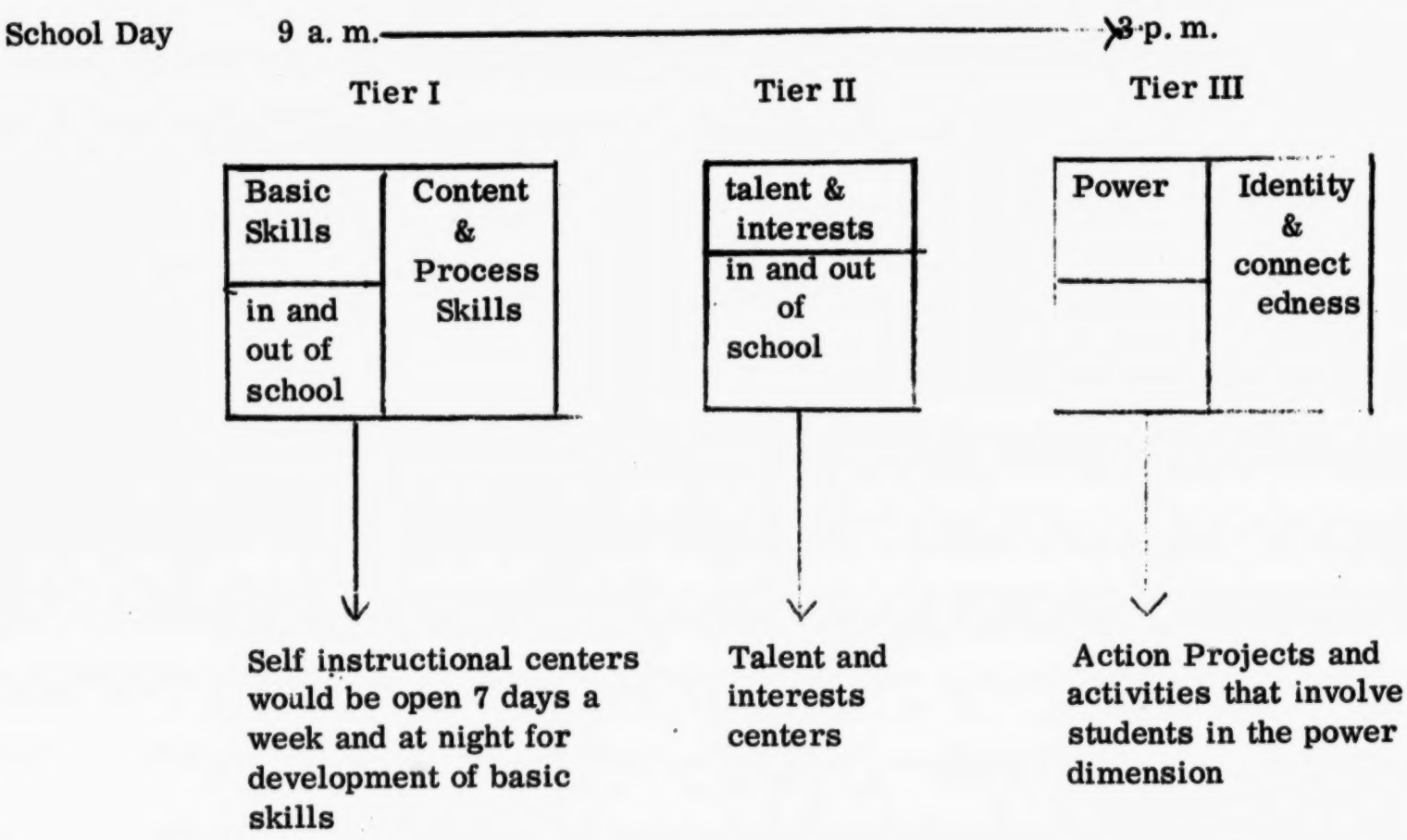
Tier III may be thought of as group inquiry into 1) The issues and problems of social action that are personally related to the students and 2) exploration of self and others. Inherent in this tier are programs for developing the kinds of sample objectives noted earlier (i.e., "B" or "social objectives" and "C" or "personal development objectives"). A higher level of learning to learn skills -- "self and other awaring skills" -- would also be explored here. These are the skills required in recognizing and describing oneself and others multi-dimensionally, especially in terms of feeling states and concerns. Tier III, thus, would mainly be involved with power, identity, and connectedness education and would allow for a greater emphasis on the affective aspects of education.

If one thinks of a school in terms of these three tiers or curricular modes one can see that each tier is not completely isolated, but instead overlaps somewhat with the others. For example, Tiers I and III would find it difficult to function completely effectively without occasionally dipping into the basic skills and information tier. Each of the three curricular modes has different strengths to offer and different weaknesses. But, blended together in proper proportions they could achieve, we feel, a far greater and more balanced educational result than can any one of them taken alone.

It is interesting to note how an organization and objectives of this kind lessen one of the great problems of the urban school -- grouping. In Tiers I and II, since there is

greater emphasis on individualized instruction and much less reliance on group instruction in the academic areas, individuals are not saddled with labels that are punishing. The talent and interest areas of Tier II do not require that everyone be at the same academic levels in order to pursue a common interest. Tier III in which group instruction does take place allows for heterogenous grouping since children are not competing for grade level achievement norms. Here they are working on issues in which diverse backgrounds and experiences are <u>needed</u> to hit at problems from as many vantage points as possible. In other words, differences are required for providing the best cross-fertilization possible when dealing with social and personal concerns.

Probably the first reaction to the three tiered model is "how would you possibly do all these things within a school day?" We feel that this scheme can easily be achieved if one envisions an extended school day -- with the school and numerous out-of-school instructional centers open at least 12 hours a day, six and even seven days a week. The basic organization and initiation of the studies would occur during the standard 9-3 schedule, but once the children are started on certain paths of study and discussion they do not have to be limited to the conventional school day. For example, as long as skills centers manned by trained skills counselors were established, students would be able to utilize these outside of the classroom for their own development in Tier I. Likewise, talent and interest centers would also be established outside the school for Tier II development. Action projects and activities related particularly to the development of a sense of power and control over situations (Tier III) would similarly take place outside of the school as well as inside. The rough diagram below may help clarify some of this:


School Day
9 a. m.
3 p. m.
Tier I
Tier II
Tier III
Basic Skills
in and out of school
Content & Process Skills
talent & interests
in and out of school
Power
Identity & connect edness
Self instructional centers would be open 7 days a week and at night for development of basic skills
Talent and interests centers
Action Projects and activities that involve students in the power dimension

The comment at this point may be that anything can be done -- any educational innovation realized -- if the school day were to be lengthened. This may be true. Yet even if the school day were not extended and instead Tier I were taught with IPI-like procedures and materials there would be more time available from 9-3 than there is in the present conventional scheduling -- time that could be utilized for Tier II and III instruction. In addition, there already exists a movement that is gathering momentum to leave the schools open longer to allow for greater community and school involvement. Having children in the schools after 3 p. m. involved in aspects of the three tiers at the same time their parents are there, perhaps engaged themselves in self-instructional labs, would do much to strengthen the relationship between school and community.

C. Staffing

Usually we talk about wanting good teachers for our schools, but we rarely talk about good teachers for what? We expect a single teacher to be able to effectively cover all kinds of subjects and objectives whether he's comfortable with them or not.

In the three tiered model, however, teachers would be assigned to tiers on the basis of their strengths and interests. In addition, people from the community would also be assigned to each of the tiers on the same basis. For example, Tier I would include technically-inclined and subject-oriented teachers, tutors, and parents', Tier II would include one-to-one and activities-oriented teachers and parents who show creativity and wide ranges of interests; Tier III would include more inductive, open-ended, child situation-oriented teachers & parents who would collaborate with the community on social action projects and identity training. A more explicit breakdown of the teacher (as well as parent and community member) types and the learning tasks they will be handling is seen below in the chart by Bernard H. McKenna. Although McKenna has not designed the chart in terms of staffing for a three-tiered school, it nevertheless fits nicely into the scheme (the delineations for the three tiers have been inserted by the authors into the original McKenna chart).

A TEACHING PROFICIENCY MODEL BY CATEGORIES OF LEARNING TASKS*

Teacher Type and Proficiency	Learning Task Category
5. Facilitator of Attitude and and Interpersonal Behavior Development: human relations attitudes and skills.	Attaining a variety of human relations attitudes and behaviors, e. g. acceptance and appreciation of cultural differences, group process, group leadership roles.
4. Developer of Talents and Aptitudes: A skill for developing talent.	Developing a potential talent in a specialized area, e. g., proficiency in dealing with higher mathematical concepts playing a musical instrument, writing plays.
3. Identifier of Talents: Skill in promoting exploration in broad fields.	Identifying interests and aptitudes appertaining to interests, e. g., exploratory experiences in industrial arts, stenography, music, creative writing, earth science.
2. Liberal Enlightener: skill as a master presenter.	Enlightenment in areas in which knowledge of the general population is considered important but in which every individual is not required to be proficient, e. g., types of literature, geological structure, weaving rugs.
1. Teacher Technologist: Skill in administering basic skills and knowledges.	Mastering skills and knowledges considered essential for all, e. g., reading, historical facts of nations, computational skills.

*Bernard H McKenna, School Staffing Patterns, Pamphlet from the California Teachers Association, Burlingame, California.

The involvement of parents, then, in Tier I would be primarily in terms of teacher aides who are trained to work with various skill areas. In Tier II, parents and community people who have special interests, talents or hobbies would be tapped as talent developers, thereby expanding the reservoir of resource people into a greater pool than is normally available in a single school. In Tier III, community people (although not necessarily parents) could feasibly sit in with the children on social action seminars. If this kind of involvement of parents and community people were really achieved, there would be a much greater potential for a school to work out cooperatively with community groups its policies for more shared control and staffing.

D. Relationship of the School to the Community

Although this topic may seem peripheral to the explanation and development of a three-tiered school per se, one can scarcely talk of any type of school for an urban area without examining further its relationship to the community.

As previously inferred, public schools in American society belong to the public. In large urban areas the highly bureaucratized school organization has become unresponsive to the needs and aspirations of the publics within its diverse communities. A new and more dynamic relationship needs to be cultivated between parents, community, and the urban schools. School need to be viewed as "open" institutions that serve people not just children.

One way to develop closer community participation in the urban school in addition to utilizing parents and community people as staff in the actual operation of each of the three tiers, is through a school-community council in which parents and community representatives would become the trustees of the school. Perhaps clusters of schools (e.g., secondary school and its feeder schools) can be organized with representative governing boards to oversee the cluster. Such an arrangement would not only help

connect urban communities to the schools that serve them, but would also increase the stake in developing relevant educational programs and give learners in those schools a sense of pride through identification. Moreover, the community would be given a sense of potency over a major institution that shapes their lives and the lives of their children.

As seen in the "Bundy Report," which addresses itself to the present disconnection between the school and parents and students and which proposes a reconnection for learning through increased parent and community participation in local school policy, urban schools -- three tiered or otherwise -- must establish new relationships with the community. It is the combination, however, of both the three-tiered model and increased community control that, to us, would seem to deal most directly and effectively with the social realities and needs of urban schools and their clientele.

IV. CONCLUSION

A school program arranged in three-tiered fashion would be geared to meeting the common needs of all children without sacrificing individuality or cultural diversity. Moreover, it would foster the kind of meaningful mental framework that is conducive to the learning of academic subject matter and, because this learning would be personally meaningful to the pupils, the ability to transfer ideas and principles acquired in one context to another context would be engendered in the school's products. In other words, by dividing the school schedule into such segments as these three, rather than according to subject-matter learning per se, the educational process would be significantly more efficient in accomplishing its long-expressed aims. Indeed, only through such reorganization and reorientation can educators hope to meet America's need for the human resources which will revitalize and perpetuate the country as a healthy and self-renewing nation.

This time of national crisis is a time for new leadership, and a time when needed and effective changes in our social institutions have the best chances of being implemented and sustained. The crisis of the disadvantaged has provided educators with a unique and epoch-making opportunity for effecting true and penetrating reform; what will they do with this opportunity? Will they use it to perpetuate the unwieldy, ineffective, and deteriorating status quo? Will they adopt a policy of "wait and see," reacting only after the fact to societal demands? Or will they seize this opportunity to assume the roles of initiators, revising education to become the instrument of societal reconstruction and renewal, of individual and societal health, and of human progress?

This is the challenge of the urban school to education.